Deteriorating condition of Government Hospitals

†3907. PROF. R. B. S. VARMA : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the condition of most of Government hospitals of the country is deteriorating day by day;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have taken any concrete steps for improvement therein keeping in view the deplorable condition of all these hospitals; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA) : (a) to (d) Health being a State subject, it is for the respective State Government to ensure that adequate facilities are available in the Government Hospitals under them. However adequate facilities are available in Central Government Hospitals. Improvement in the medical services in these hospitals is a continous process and the same is undertaken as per the need within the available financial resources.

Distribution of iron tablets among pregnant women

3908. SHRI R. P. GOENKA : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the impact of distribution of iron tablets among pregnant women having iron-deficiency;

(b) whether Government are considering distribution of fortified *atta* in place of wheat through the Public Distribution System since anaemia is a more common ailment; and

(c) if not, the impediments that are coming in the way?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA) : (a) There is a physiological deficiency of iron during pregnancy leading to anaemia, if iron is not supplemented. Under the Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) Programme, iron and folic acid tablets are supplied to all sub-centres in the country for prophylaxis and treatment of anaemia among pregnant women. The

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

estimation of haemoglobin at the National level was undertaken for the first time as part of the National Family Health Survey (NHFS-II) conducted in 1998-99. The findings show that only 22% had mild anaemia, 25% moderate anaemia and 2.5% has severe anaemia. 50.3% pregnant women did not suffer from anaemia.

(b) and (c) There is no proposal for distribution of fortified *atta* in place of wheat through Public Distribution System (PDS). The limited shelf life of *atta* as compared to that of wheat is one of the reasons for not encouraging such a proposal.

Malnutrition among children

3909. SHRI R. P. GOENKA : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Bank has drawn attention to the silent emergency in which half of all children under the age of four are mal-nourished, thirty per cent of newborn are under-weight and sixty per cent of women are anaemic;

(b) whether malnutrition has resulted in loss of productivity to the extent of Rs. 50,000 crores in a year; and

(c) the specific measures Government are taking to reduce the incidence of malnutrition?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA) : (a) The World Bank Report Publication forms a part of the Government of India World Bank collaboration in Nutrition which began in 1980. As per the report, half of all the children below four years are malnourished, 30% of newborn are under-weight and 60% women are anaemic.

As per the findings of National Family Health Survey-II conducted in 1998-99, about 47% of children below three are under-nourished. The Survey also reported that only 30% of babies were weighted, out of which one fifth were reported to below birth weight. The survey further reports that about half of the women in the reprodutive age group are anaemic. However, over the years a positive trend has been noticed in the country in most of the basic indicators of child health. There has been a steady fall in the infant mortality rate, the pre-natal mortality rate and the under five mortality rate. The prevalence of severe and moderate degree of malnutrition among children below four years has also come down.